TITLE: Half A Million Wanted Persons

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A collection of articles on the historical, operational, doctrinal, and theoretical aspects of intelligence.

Aims and methods of manipulating CI biographic information.

HALF A MILLION WANTED PERSONS

Earl D. Engeljohn

On 21 February 1963 a gunman wearing a stocking mask held up the Metropolitan National Bank of Wheaton, Maryland, and escaped with $12,000. The Montgomery County Police and FBI agents rushed to the scene to investigate. Witnesses were questioned, a physical description of the fugitive was assembled, and clues to his identity were sought. Files were searched, one may assume, against the descriptive data and other clues, and on tentative identification his associates were interrogated for leads to his whereabouts. If he had fled to another city or state, the help of other police departments would have to be asked for, if out of the country that of foreign police organizations or Interpol.

The same kind of effort is required in counterintelligence. All persons now or formerly employed by Sino-Soviet Bloc intelligence and security services, either as staff members or as agents, and all persons connected with them are material witnesses on the espionage and covert action, including violent action, directed against us by the Bloc. Without exception each of these persons, conservatively estimated at 500,000 in number, can supply pertinent information. They will all know something about the organization, location, or activity of the adversary services, how they operate against us, who is planning or conducting operations. They can name other informed persons, some of them accessible in the West for questioning—ex-colleagues, ex-agents, ex-contacts, or old victims. A striking example of the apprehension of one such wanted person through another is the arrest in 1957 of Rudolf Ivanovich Abel, made possible by the questioning of KGB defector Reino Hayhanen.[1]

In pursuit of these half a million persons wanted for questioning, some of them at large in the West and some for the

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[1] The Abel story is told in *Studies* III 4, p. 1 ff.

present inaccessible behind their Curtain, thousands of persons must be interrogated in minute detail, and records, both public and private, all over the world—registries of city residents, vital statistics, visa applications, social security registries, the holdings of U.S. agencies and allied foreign intelligence services—need to be checked. The mounting accumulation of information must be so stored that it can be rapidly retrieved and collated in many different ways. Then if we launch successful operations on the basis of this information to get staff officers of Bloc services like Hayhanen or their agents to defect or collaborate with us in place and as we continue our routine investigations of agent suspects and our double agent operations, the yield of information from these multiplies our knowledge of the still wanted persons—and our need to manage and manipulate the data skillfully.

We have made a good, if modest, beginning in the manipulation of our information. We learned years ago that a manual index card system is inadequate to cope with data ranging through a number of different categories on half a million persons. We have devised machine programs to handle some of our information, letting the machines do the "coolie labor" of collation and freeing analysts and operatives to exploit the information; but the present machine programs must be considerably augmented and made to handle *all* of our wanted-persons information if we are to pursue these persons successfully. In the following we review some of the things the machines should be able to do for us.

Rosters by Category

Machines can file, sort, and retrieve information (note that we are speaking of *information,* not documents); they can print out rosters of our wanted persons grouped according to any of several categories of data about them, for example:

Last name	Destination of travel undertaken
First name	Relatives in the West, if any, and where
Location	Employer
Occupation	Vulnerabilities

Using index cards, we have only one "handle" by which to retrieve information—the last name of the person, filed in alphabetic order. With machines, we can use 20 handles or

more, depending upon our planning and our needs. Much of our information on the staff members of the East German clandestine service is now in machine language, and we use a number of category rosters which have been exceedingly helpful in the questioning of those that have fled to the West.

For a wanted person should, once he is available for questioning, be interrogated about his wanted colleagues. The interviewer can do this most effectively by going down the roster of those who previous information indicates should have been his colleagues. This exercise, besides producing new information, often corrects misspellings and other inaccurate entries and helps purge the files. In Berlin in the fall of 1959, for instance, a former staff member of the East German service, Max Heim, helped us correct the name of one of his colleagues, which we had listed as Hans Niottke, to *M*iottke, an entry which an alphabetical trace would not have turned up. Rosters used in this way also quickly expose frauds and fabricators claiming to have information on a Sino-Soviet Bloc service; their ignorance becomes evident under intensive questioning based on the rosters.

Flushing Leads

Machine listings to turn up operational leads are easily devised. The machine can pick out all staff members of Bloc services who are known to have relatives in the West, and when these relatives are questioned some may be able to suggest means to lure their kinsman over to us or at least to neutralize him. A West German related to the wife of a high-ranking officer of the East German service was one such valuable lead uncovered through a machine listing. Or a list could be made of staff members having criminal records or past affiliations with the Nazi Party. A list of those whose photographs we have on file or from whom we have a signature or handwriting specimen would show the most feasible targets for a smear campaign by forgery.

Our program for indexing all travelers to or from Bloc countries is another search for leads: some of these are intelligence officers or agents, and we may get clues from other sources as to which they are. A defector from the East German service, Guenter Maennel, said that he had once re-

cruited a Kurt Hoffmann, who was later sent to Havana. Sure enough, the name Kurt Hoffmann appears on our list of East German travelers to Cuba. Maennel and other defectors from his service, scanning this list, may be able to spot the names of other East German agents going to Cuba; similarly Polish defectors working with the travel list of Poles to Cuba. Moreover, the monitoring of travelers will have recorded bits and pieces of information on the background of those that turn out to be agents or perhaps are recruited subsequently.

A relatively new use of machine capabilities contributing to leads and other purposes is to keep track of who knows whom. We are just beginning to manipulate this type of information, but it is evident that knowing who among the personnel of the Bloc services has connections with which others will be valuable in the questioning of informed sources. It would be a weary task to cull this data from the files manually.

Indices Abroad

It is often of critical importance to have information available at the place where a man is being questioned; he may not be able to recall some name or event without being questioned on related incidents or persons to stimulate his memory. It would be awkward to carry around an index of 100,000 cards; machines make our information portable. Rosters of wanted persons should be located strategically at our stations around the globe and suitably edited versions made available to friendly foreign services to take advantage of the principle of "many eyes." A complete roster could be taken to the scene of an operation for quick checks when there is not time to get a headquarters trace, as we did with our East German service listing in Rome during operations connected with the Olympics in the summer of 1960. For browsing purposes such rosters at the field stations would in large measure remove the annoying bottleneck of having to write cables or dispatches, with the usual delay in releases and transmission, to get it done at headquarters. A complete trace to clear a subject for action such as recruitment must of course include checking the main index at headquarters; this is a different

thing than browsing in a portable field "library" to flush additional information from a source being questioned nearby.

Quite another problem is posed by the valuable wanted-persons information dispersed all over the world in record holdings that do not belong to us. A photograph may be in Italian Foreign Ministry hands, a criminal record in police files in Rio de Janeiro, a Nazi Party card in the Berlin Documents Center, a visa record in the immigration files in Melbourne, an espionage case record in the archives of the British secret service, and miscellaneous relevant information in the holdings of the National Security Agency—all on the same person. Is it ever all assembled? Only in the rare case that we do a full trace and know in advance which repositories have information on the person. Our habit is to trace only after our interest is aroused and then only in the usual places. If we traced in *all* the places *in advance* of any particular stimulus to our interest, the assembled information might provide that stimulus with respect to a number of wanted persons. A trace of the names of several thousand staff members of the East German service in the files of the Berlin Documents Center, for example, established that over a dozen of them had records of membership in the Nazi Party, an item of information that any East German official would like very much to erase from his past.[*] What we need, then, is a convenient means for checking blocks of names in the thousands against other record holdings, and machine techniques can furnish such a means.

Unsolved Cases

Probably the most difficult category of information to deal with, and yet sometimes the most critical, is the data on unsolved cases. Let us say that a Soviet defector has told us of the recruitment of a waitress in Paris, about 35 years old, of Polish extraction, to gather information on our embassy there. Without a name, there used to be no good way to file this information and recover it for collation with other scraps of data. But by using machine-manipulated categories it can

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[*] *East German Farm Chief Kicked Out; Bartsch Is Fired After Revelation That He Was Nazi*, read a headline in the *Washington Post* of 11 February 1963.

be registered under Occupation (waitress), Location (Paris), Nationality (Polish), Service (Soviet), Target (U.S. Embassy), and Age (about 35 years). Then if we are questioning some- one who knows something about Soviet operations in Paris the roster of wanted persons in Paris will include this wait- ress, and it may be possible to identify her. There are a num- ber of similar unsolved cases in our German holdings which have been lost for all practical purposes because we have had no way to keep them under review; putting them into the ma- chine system would reactivate them. To the extent that se- curity considerations permit we could also pass listings on unsolved cases to friendly foreign services and so augment the possibility of solutions.

Fringe Benefits

Two advantageous by-products of the machine file are cable economy and the ready availability of statistics. If headquar- ters and a field station both have copies of the same rosters, trace requests can be significantly shortened by citing the roster number designating the subject. On receipt of a simple "REQUEST TRACES WILHELM MUELLER, B1461," headquar- ters can get from the roster the identifying data on Mueller which otherwise would have had to be included in the cable.

From the machine listings one can also determine auto- matically, for example, how many of the staff of the Soviet service have been dismissed, how many have criminal records, or how many there are altogether that we know about. Fig- ures such as these may be used to project an estimate of the total strength and give us some idea of the morale and per- sonnel problems of a service. We have reached a position where we can provide some of these statistics on the East German service.

We have thus made a beginning, but we have a very long road ahead of us before all our CI biographic information is incorporated into machine systems. Meantime, as we con- tinue—and, hopefully, intensify—our operations against the hostile services, the scope and nature of our work may per- haps be seen in sharper relief if we regard it as the pursuit of half a million wanted persons.